1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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A graph covering the last hundred years (Fig. 58) shows inter-censal net migrations and annual variations in the scale of movement as indicated by passports issued and by the Customs and Port Department records. The latter are adjusted for each decade to make the sum of annual totals comparable with the inter-censal net totals shown in Table 30 (see also Fig. 59).

In the nineteenth century, the principal factors affecting the scale of migration were economic. Periods of poverty at home sometimes drove the Maltese overseas while at other times they were attracted by boom conditions elsewhere in the Mediterranean. During the Crimean War, not even prosperity at home could counteract the cotton and building boom in Egypt and emigration rose to record heights (24). But the end of the Egyptian boom coincided with depression in Barbary and the two resulted in returns to Malta which more than compensated for the outward movement of the 50's and 60's. In the 1870's, recovery in Barbary coincided with slight recession in Malta and the number of emigrants again increased only to diminish again in 1875-80, reflecting bankrupt conditions in Egypt (25). The economic position of the receiving countries therefore played an important part in determining the volume of emigration at any given moment.

An outstanding feature of nineteenth century movement was a series of attempts to organise emigration from the Maltese Islands. The first of these ended with the failure of the Guiana and Granada experiments of 1831-41 when plantation settlement in these areas was attempted (26). Subsequent plans to settle colonies in Cyprus, Australia and the Americas collapsed and various other attempts to establish Maltese communities overseas each failed in turn. As a result, over 90 per cent. of nineteenth century emigrants moved no further than the coasts of North Africa and the Levant.

The restricted scope of movement and the choice of the Mediterranean seaboard for settlement was influenced by three main non-economic factors: 'the belief that America and Australia were the permanent homes of strange and deadly diseases; the belief that it was necessary to settle in a country near enough to Malta to allow easy and frequent return to the beloved homeland; and the belief that similarity of language and custom marked out North Africa as the divinely appointed region for Maltese settlement abroad' (27).

The annexation of Tunis by the French in 1881 was an indication that the Maltese would no longer find North Africa an open field and the competition in business and commerce from the French and Italians became severe. Moreover, the standard of living in Malta from the 1860's onwards was higher than in most other parts of the Mediterranean so that there was little incentive for the Maltese to go there. Furthermore, the 80's saw the expansion of employment opportunities at home with the introduction of a number of schemes involving large scale public expenditure. As a result of such developments, the period from the late 1880's until 1905 was one in which there was a net inward movement. All thoughts of migration were abandoned and in 1905 the labour shortage was so acute that 300 workers were brought in from Sicily, Italy and Spain. 1906 saw the completion of major harbour and dockyard works and unemployment then became a serious problem which was partially responsible for the visit of the Royal Commission in 1911 (28). Since French and Italian control of North Africa was then complete, attention had to be paid to movement further afield.

In 1907, on the basis of experience already gained and during the period of depression, a voluntary organisation known as the Malta Emigration Committee was formed. In spite of the approval shown by the 1912 Royal Commissioners, this body was neither given any official status nor superseded by any official organisation. Partly as a result of the difficulties confronting the Committee, a Brazilian venture failed miserably in 1912, and in 1916 an unhappy combination of circumstances provoked such Australian antagonism to migration to that continent that an embargo on future movement was established which prevailed until 1920.

In 1918 the need for adjustment to post-war conditions became sufficiently great to force the establishment of an Emigration Department charged with the control of movement and the selection of personnel (Fig. 60). The social aspects

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
EZ6 Malta EZ6

efficient as judged by yields. This is the group mainly responsible for the fairly steady progress made during the last 30 years but their productivity is neither high enough for modern needs nor attractive enough to ensure family succession on the land. A typical example is a composite case-study:-

M - In Region C XVII, the Naxxar-Gharghur Hills, lies a holding of 40 *tmien* (Fig. 143). Two wells supply water except in high summer. The 60-year-old farmer and his wife live in a relatively new farmhouse, an older dwelling with byres now being used to house six Friesian cows, seven goats, a horse and a mule. The grown-up children have either emigrated or work in *'il-Belt'* and have no interest in the land. The farmer built up his herd in the period after World War II and would like to increase its size but realises that he could not handle any more stock. About 5 *tmien* of land is usually under potatoes, small plots carry vegetables for home use, and the remainder grows fodder. This allocation results partly from the swing towards milk production but also from the high cost of hired labour to work the land. Husbandry is fairly good but the farmer confesses his technical ignorance and has no younger generation on the farm to encourage him. He keeps no accounts since 'this is the way he lives'.

Many other examples of sub-types of Maltese farmer could be given, ranging from the highly organised syndicate of five brothers which practises successful mixed farming in Region C XVIII d, Siggiewi but which, almost as a result, is highly resistant to change; to the fruit and vegetable farmers of Wied San Blas in Gozo (Region III, Northern). Those given represent a fairly comprehensive cross-section of the producers who, within their limitations, make a fairly efficient use of land resources. Unfortunately this is not enough. All but a very few are commercially limited to an appreciation of the local not very exacting markets. In no case have we found any appreciation of costing by profit but only a more or less vague knowledge of gross returns. Everywhere there is suspicion, not vicious or pathological but quietly ingrained. It is assumed that the only way to ensure fair purchase prices is personally to deliver the produce - even to the M.M.U. It is equally natural to be suspicious of bureaucracy - a not abnormal rural phenomenon - and also of the practical knowledge if not the learning of advisers. A great many farmers are also conscious of a helplessness, of being left behind by the cunning of the city. This too is a not abnormal country attitude but, seen in the context of the whole social nexus, it is dangerous.

Note: For a fuller consideration of some case-studies see P. K. Mitchell: 'Studies in the Agrarian Geography of Malta'; Part II, 'The Maltese Farm'; Report to C.E.R.C., Durham, 1960, and B. W. Beeley: 'The Farmer and Rural Society in Malta'; Report to C.E.R.C., Durham, 1960.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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landlords and other important people who influence the affairs of the country live and work in the city or its suburbs. Finally, the greater part of the island's wage-earning population travels to work in this area.

Differences in language, dress and education set many of the villagers apart from their urban compatriots. That this should be so is not surprising, for the inhabitants of the city have been in contact with the country's foreign masters for many centuries. The Maltese upper classes, and those who aspire to be so considered, have studiously imitated the manners, speech and dress of these foreign residents. An English visitor early in the seventeenth century remarked on this contrast between the townsmen, who struck him as being 'altogether frenchified', and the countrymen, whom he described as 'half clad, and indeed a miserable people'.[1]

There is a noticeable difference between the heavy consonants and broad vowels of the uneducated countryman, and the English-accented Maltese of the inhabitants of Sliema, many of whose children speak more English than Maltese. There are also differences in vocabulary and inflection, for the language spoken in Valletta and the towns contains many more Italian and English words and expressions than the village Maltese. In fact, their preference for foreign words has given the inhabitants of Sliema the collective, and slightly derogatory, nickname of *tal-mama*, which derives from their habit of using the Italian word *mamà* (mother) instead of the Maltese *omm*. Village children, however, are now taught a standard Maltese at school, and they are urged to substitute this, *il-Malti bil-pulit*, for their local dialects.

The social and cultural differences between town and country have led to the creation of stereotypes. The typical townsman was often described to me by villagers as a white-collar worker who goes to cocktail parties, tries to look like an Englishman – pipe, tweeds and moustache – and speaks English to his children. The villager, on the other hand, is portrayed as an illiterate rustic who spends his money on wine and fireworks, without a thought for the future of his children. Both caricatures, of course, are gross exaggerations, but each, none the less, contains elements of truth. But many farmers and poor village labourers make great sacrifices in order to give their children an education beyond the elementary level.

[1] George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey Begun A.D. 1610* (London, W. Barnett, 1615), p. 234.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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act as godparents. For this reason a number of people, prevented from inviting relatives and friends to fill this office, have preferred not to baptize their children.

Many have bowed to the authority of the Church and have stopped supporting the Labour Party. But in spite of everything that has been preached on the subject, many others still feel that there is nothing incompatible between support of their political leader and loyalty to their religion. This view is expressed in the slogan which is displayed so often at MLP rallies that it has become almost a party motto: 'With Mintoff always, against the Church never.' Although they are told from the pulpit that it does them no good, most members of the Labour Party continue to attend the daily or weekly services of worship that they have been going to since childhood. Besides, many have rationalized their action by saying that the Archbishop of Malta is acting for personal and political motives; as long as the Pope himself does not condemn the MLP they will continue to support it. This attitude is reinforced by the experience of some Labour supporters who have been absolved while on holiday or on duty with the military services in countries where it is possible to be a Socialist and a practising Catholic at the same time.

As a result of these sanctions many have turned their backs on the Church and no longer attend religious services. Before this struggle between the MLP and the Church, it would have been unthinkable for anyone in a small village to stay away from church. A civil servant in one village told me that he had been a confirmed atheist for years. Yet until this past year he had gone to church every Sunday. In his words, 'People make it very difficult for someone who does not go to church, and I have to live here all my life. Besides, I might lose my job if people complained about me.' But he is now an open supporter of the Labour Party and no longer feels obliged to go to church. To some extent, then, the sanctions of the Church have created a social role for the non-practising Catholic.

The attitude of many who support the Labour Party is summed up in the words of a twenty-year-old bus conductor in Kortin. We were sitting around a table in a small wine shop when I asked him why he supported the MLP in spite of the opposition of the Church to it and the fact that Mintoff was regarded as a Communist by so many in the village. He replied in English, 'I am

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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578 665 794 795 829 [115] young, I cannot even vote in the next election. But I must think of the future. I feel that Mintoff is doing what is right for Malta. He helped the poor people when he made the government. The Church fights Mintoff because she fears she will lose her privileges and power if he wins, and that he will tax her property. The Church is in favour of keeping people ignorant, and limiting their education. Why? Because when people are educated they think for themselves and can judge. They no longer follow blindly. Besides, you should not take too seriously all this talk of Communism – they are products of this fight. In a fight, people use all means available.'

The street sweeper who was with us understood most of the conversation and shook his head in disagreement. His only comment was the proverb, 'A ship with two captains can't sail' (*Il-vapur biż-żewġ kaptani ma jimxiex*). At this every one in the shop nodded in agreement, for both Labour and Church supporters had different captains in mind. Those who support the Archbishop look to him as the leader of the Maltese people. They make little distinction between Church and State. Labour supporters, in contrast, make a clear distinction. Mintoff is their candidate for head of State, and since they see the Archbishop as interfering with their choice, they accuse him of reaching out to control both Church and State.

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578 665 794 [793] At the village level, this conflict has brought about a bitter division. All societies and groups which are not formally identified with one side or the other, have been divided and weakened by politically based factions. The parish priest is the leader of those who support the Archbishop. His most enthusiastic followers are the clergy and the members of the lay societies. This group, with the other prominent villagers who make up the parish priest's circle, provide the hard core of the active opposition to the MLP. Considering the offices that they occupy and the societies to which they belong, it could hardly be otherwise. They usually meet in the club houses of the societies, but sometimes the older members meet in a particular café.

The hard core of the Labour group is made up of the officers of the local MLP Committee and the members who openly frequent the club. There is very little contact between the leaders and

6:Beeley K-5 (1957-1958) 1959 EZ6 Malta EZ6

The over-all averages show that the farmers, of whom 9% were 'poor' by the C.A.R.E. definition, in 1958, are, as a class, slightly poorer than the 8.2% average for the whole population.

This pattern of comparatively low living standards in rural-agricultural Malta and Gozo is the essence of the problem with which this Section has been concerned. While farming and inferior standards of life remain synonomous in the Islands the younger generation of the rural community will not be content to remain on the land.

SECTION 4 : The Farmer's Outlook and Attitudes.

The importance of the past in understanding the present in Maltese agriculture has been emphasized. The change from peasant to commercial farming has been considered from its technical (Section 2) and its economic aspects (Section 3). The social background to this change is, however, no less important, particularly in so far as it relates to the work, thought and attitudes of a farmer who in fact is often little removed from the traditional when one penetrates a veneer of commercial profit-farming. Both among the literate and illiterate sections of the farming community this question of attitudes and outlook is of fundamental importance in any efforts towards improvements in Maltese agriculture.

The social environment of the Maltese countryman may be seen as three concentric circles, the family, village, and Malta. To the Gozitan who has never crossed the sea to Malta and to the old farmer who knows little of Valletta the concept of 'Malta' is something large and indeterminate. Even for the majority of the rural population, for whom Valletta and the towns are becoming a familiar part of experience, the Islands are large enough for them to feel none of the claustrophobia of which visitors to Malta complain. The 'National' unit is big enough for the farmer to speak of "Il-Gvern" - the Government of which he has heard frequently though imprecisely on all sides and on which he blames many of his economic and social problems. In this important concept of 'Gvern' no very clear distinction is made between the local Maltese authorities and the Imperial side of the Dyarchy[37]. Neither is allegiance to political parties very significant for personality is more important than party. Historically, this attitude to a remote 'Gvern' probably descends from the tradition of rule in the Islands which has included foreign British government since 1800 and the paternal but rigid hold of the Knights of St. John during their previous two and a half centuries in the Islands.

6:Beeley K-5 (1957-1958) 1959 EZ6 Malta EZ6

795 Another Malta-wide authority is the Church, but the summit of this is scarcely less remote to the farmer than is 'Il-Gvern' for in the normal practice of his religion he leans directly on the local church and priests.

829 To the farmer 'Gvern' is synonomous with control. Illiteracy has, in the past, made it very difficult for him to view authority with anything but suspicion. This has not been made easier by incompetent and condescending elements within officialdom whose actions, if any, have confirmed the doubts of the small farmer striving to provide his family with a living despite the odds against him - of which 'Gvern' was one.

178 Today the picture is changing. It is official policy
654 to "encourage investment and to improve farming methods so as to raise the efficiency of the industry to a level where it can provide a decent livelihood for those engaged in it"[38].

178 The farmers' reactions to efforts on his behalf are
156 particularly important at this crucial stage in the pro-
829 gress of agriculture in the Islands. Essentially his outlook retains much of the traditional reserve and caution of the illiterate peasant, an attitude apparent also in two further contexts, the organization within farming itself (Unions, Co-Operatives, etc.), and the farmers' attitudes towards society in general and rural society in particular.

829 The three aspects of the problem may be re-phrased as
156 (i) the farmer's attitudes to officialdom, espec- the Department of Agriculture, and 'Il-Gvern' generally,

(ii) his attitude towards other farmers and towards the industry as a whole,

(iii) his position as a member of a socially 'low' class within Malta.

[561] Within each of these the present gulf between the younger generation, with a degree of education and emancipation, and the older (including most of the Islands' full-time farmers) produces a further conflict of attitudes and aspirations.

654 THE FARMER AND GOVERNMENT

Official interest in agricultural development has increased very rapidly during the present decade and now includes a wide variety of measures aimed at improving farming by financial support and investment. These have been outlined in Section 2. There has also been an attempt to educate the farmer in better suited techniques and to make him aware of improvements which, it is believed, will increase the profit from his farm or herd. The problem here is seen to be twofold:

654 232 their adoption. Sales soared after the ration appeared and the idea spread rapidly from farmer to farmer. Unforeseen difficulties soon emerged however and threatened to make the ration unpopular among pig breeders as quickly as it had become popular a short while before. Partly on account of ignorance and illiteracy and partly because of the lack of the correct kind of propaganda farmers began to find that the ration was not the magical remedy to their pig problems. A sample investigation, by the writer, in Gozo among farmers who had purchased the balanced ration showed that some of them had understood it to be a kind of medicine to be given <u>in addition</u> to the diet normally fed, others treated it as one item of the feed and mixed it with their normal ration to the pigs, while most common of all was the complaint that "I've been feeding the balanced ration for a week and there is no sign of the promised improvement so I'm using no more". Individuals of this latter inclination not only stopped purchasing the ration themselves but spread ugly rumours about it among their fellows. None of those with such complaints would consider approaching the Officers of the Advisory Service - as they had in fact been invited to do in the leaflet[40]. For them the new pig feed was a failure.

654 829 242 232 Illiteracy produces a feeling of inferiority in most cases which makes the farmer too timid to approach a department or an official on some problem. Moreover the written word is for them suspect. Therefore if they are to be persuaded to adopt new techniques in their farming the instruction will have to be personal and followed up with further help and advice when difficulties and lack of appreciation of what is intended emerge. For these farmers lectures are too remote. Demonstrations of new crops or cultivation methods, etc. are more likely to succeed but are insufficient in themselves. Unfortunately a large qualified staff of visiting advisers would be necessary to supervise farmers at such an individual level. In Malta this is not yet available. Even if it were the farmers' trust would have to be gained and maintained at every stage. In the past such trust has been conspicuous but its absence with the farmer believing that everyone with whom he comes in contact is anxious to take advantage of his illiteracy for their own gain. There has been no-one to give him professional, impartial advice on farming and the new Advisory Service with its free information and other help to the farmer is still something of an unknown quantity. The Agrarian Society (B/286) has in the past been responsible for a certain amount of research on agricultural topics in Malta but does not appear

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654 to have made its presence felt among the farmers themselves.
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When a greater number of qualified personnel are available the Advisory Service and its various ramifications may go a very long way to improving Maltese agriculture and raising the profit-margin and therefore the living standards of the farming population. But in its early stages it has had to concentrate on the present farmers of Malta and Gozo who are, as has been emphasized, not only often illiterate but frequently near retiring age as well. The younger generation of farmers' sons, on whom the future of agriculture in the Islands will depend, have had to be overlooked. But if they cannot be persuaded to stay in farming the improvements accepted after great effort by the generation of their fathers will mean very little.

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In Malta and Gozo there is nothing to compare with the Young Farmers' Clubs of the United Kingdom; nothing in fact to serve as a nucleus around which an enlightened younger farming generation might develop. Neither is there anything in the Islands of the nature of an agricultural college where young farmers might be trained. It is possible that the primary schools in rural areas might provide a means of contact between the agricultural authorities and the children of the farmers but the difficulties which would arise are clear. Nevertheless such an approach as this might do something to alter the attitude to farming which is one of the biggest problems facing the industry in the Islands today. If farming and other rural children could be shown that farming is no less respectable than the variety of alternative occupations it might persuade them to stay in the industry long enough to build upon the improvements now being introduced.

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As was clear in the case of the balanced rations for pigs mentioned above the farmer is not slow to take advantage of a financial subsidy. The major example of this is the recent growth of the dairying industry with the guaranteed price to producers for milk sold to the M.M.U. (Section 2). In short, official policy here has been to make milk production profitable for the producer but at the same time to maintain a low consumer price for the pasteurized product - at a level producing a loss the cost of which is borne by the Government. The totals of milk purchased from producers by the M.M.U. reflect the rapid increase in this aspect of farming in recent years. Milk surpluses (partly losses) also increased markedly as did the percentage of milk deriving from cows rather than goats[41].

[433]

TABLE 3

Year	Purchased by M.M.U.		Surplus		Percentage cows' milk	
1943-44	510,000	gallons			27	
1948-49	776,000	"				
1950-51	1,298,000	"			35	(1951)
1952-53	1,795,000	"	99,000	gallons	44	(1951)
1954-55	2,390,000	"	275,000	"	48	(1955)
1956-57	3,542,000	"	391,000	"	57	(1956)

A consideration of Cases I to IX and XII (Section 6) shows how this official support for dairying in the Islands has made herdsmen in the Islands desperate to benefit from the guaranteed milk market. Many have greatly increased their herds and withdrawn from other aspects of their farming in order to concentrate on milk production. Removal of Government support would have serious repercussions (Section 2) but, meanwhile, the herdsman is well satisfied with his steadily increasing income. The attitude of mind which permits a herdsman to develop a particular aspect of farming on this basis is significant. Clearly he has little awareness of the artificial basis of the position or, if he has, he is poor enough to take advantage of anything likely to bring a ready return whatever the long-term limitations may be.

Following the same pattern it would seem that if the farmer can be persuaded, for example, that he would increase the profit from his farm if he were to keep cost account records and modify his farm management accordingly he would be happy to do so. Similarly, as long as the balanced ration for pigs seemed to be doing his animals no harm he continued to feed it because it was subsidized and cheap. When, through mismanagement, the animals showed no signs of any improvement he returned speedily to the traditional feeding pattern. But this is a comparatively small question by comparison with the large-scale distortion of the dairying industry as a result of the guaranteed milk price - although the farmer does not think of the situation in these terms. There emerges, therefore, something of a moral obligation on the part of the Government to maintain the situation which a subsidy or virtual subsidy, as in the case of dairying, has produced.

Just as the farmer thinks only a short way ahead in time as far as the management of his farm is concerned so are his notions of space restricted. Earlier in this Section it was observed that he is aware of little beyond Malta. Thus it is difficult to make the farmer appreciate the intricacies of the export market for Maltese agricultural produce[42]. The fact that Maltese produce for export

654 herdsman to produce a now over-grown dairy industry
426 (v. figures of milk purchases and surpluses earlier in this
454 Section).

Similar problems arise from the way in which the loans have helped farmers to acquire machinery for working their fields. As regards the small rotary cultivators this may be to the good but the position of the larger type of tractor is much more doubtful (v. Section 2), and little advisory control is at present being exercised.

UNIONS AND CO-OPERATIVES

829 The farmers' attitude to officialdom and 'Gvern' has
467 been characterized by suspicion and doubt. But certainly no less strained have been relations between one farmer and another. An 'every man for himself' attitude has emerged on the administrative side of farming in the Islands, though not at the level of small-scale economic
[474] co-operation (Section 2). The main outcome of this has been that Unions of farmers have had only a limited appeal and even marketing Co-operatives have only recently assumed
[747] any importance. The very recent tractor co-operatives (Section 2) are proving successful but would probably not have begun without free donations of equipment by C.A.R.E.[29].

A common attitude met among all types of farmers in the Islands is that "Unions can do nothing for the farmer". At present there are two but, even together, they account for a very small part of the farming population and certainly have little effect on policy or on the organization of the farming industry. One of the two Unions was founded thirty years ago but the entire administration appears to be in the hands of one man and the farmers themselves take no part in it. In 1956 a faction within the Union broke away and registered a second Union but this too has been supported by a very small number of individuals[43]. The fear at all times is that someone with education and ambitions will make use of such a Union for his own good and have no concern for the welfare of the farmers. Too ignorant and illiterate to speak for himself, the farmer believes he is surrounded by treachery on all sides and consequently withdraws from all combined effort. He is still enough a peasant at heart to believe that his own interests can best be served by he himself maintaining strict independence in his farming. This emerges throughout the projects of official help to the farming community outlined above.

829 It has also precluded the development of a substantial
474 co-operative movement in agricultural marketing and trading.

829 The details of the Co-operatives as they do exist merit
474 a more detailed mention since it is likely that they will grow in importance in the future and concern a rather larger proportion of the farming population than at present.

474 In October, 1957, there were ten co-operatives in Malta concerned with the marketing of agricultural produce: Rabat (171 members), Żabbar (86), Dingli (78), Siġġiewi (59), St. Paul's Bay (52), Żebbuġ (37), Mellieħa (33), Qormi (23), Gudja (22), and Mġarr (16). All but two of these were officially registered in 1947[44]. The ten societies are independent but have delegate representation in an eleventh body, the Farmers' Central Co-operative. In addition, there were in 1957 two other Co-operatives in Malta, one with only the minimum twelve members who clung to their complete independence, and the Co-operative Stores Malta with 80 members, the sole consumers' society. Of the four Co-operatives in Gozo at the time only one had any capital or was able to organize a market centre for Gozo farmers. All four were concerned with the distribution of fodder.

474 The two features of the Co-operative movement impor-
829 tant in the present discussion are (i) the very small number of farmers who will have anything to do with it, and (ii) the fact that the movement was initiated not by farmers but by the Government, whose official policy is now to encourage the development of both consumer and producer co-operatives in the Islands[44].

The Malta Milk Company (Il-Kumpanija Maltija tal-Ħalib) is an independent and privately run body to be distinguished from the official Milk Marketing Undertaking (M.M.U.). The organization of the Company appears to depend entirely on one man who, as secretary and manager, claims to present the milk producers' grievances to the M.M.U. authorities. Numbers of herdsmen regard the Company as able to secure for them more favourable selling conditions than they could obtain as individuals. Being mostly illiterate they feel unable to speak for themselves on such matters and yet are not inclined to support one or other of the Unions. How the producer does in fact benefit from membership of the Company is not in fact clear and some at least of its status in their eyes appears to depend on the personality of the secretary-manager[45].

474 Whatever future developments the farming Unions and
469 Co-operatives may produce it is clear that at present only
829 a small part of the farming population is concerned in either. Of the 5,635 full-time farmers in Malta in 1957 (B/164) only 589, or some 10.5% were members of the eleven producer co-operatives in the Island[46]. Fewer than one

829 474 467 in three of the 7,813 full-time farmers in both Islands at the time were even nominal members of either Union, one of which could claim to represent 25% of the farming population and the other only 6%[43].

829 467 As long as the farmers' Unions continue to represent only a minority of producers and to be divided among themselves there is little likelihood of their being able to benefit those in the industry. But the writer maintains that the grievances of the farmer today are not of the kind in which Union action could effect fundamental improvements because the position of the industry at present and at least in the immediate future depends on a policy of official benevolence. More precisely, this includes the range of financial, material and advisory assistance discussed above.

829 474 The farmer does however stand to make real gains from an efficient and popular co-operative movement. The present limited appeal of the co-operative system is a major drawback. In his interim report on the attitudes of the farming community, Fr. Cirillo observes that "the indifference and open hostility of the majority of farmers towards co-operatives can be partially explained by the fact that they are not able to give farmers the services which are expected of them....they are not in a position to operate as true marketing societies" (B/387, p.18). Fr. Cirillo also points to the mistrust of local co-operative organizers on the part of many farmers who have, moreover, never completely overcome their suspicion of the Government initiative behind the movement.

829 474 442 [426] It is clear that the system of marketing produce is the main weakness at present. Up to now most farmers have marketed their produce through a pitkal. This pitkal is a selling middleman who maintains a stall at one of the pitkalijt centres at each of which is a Government-appointed clerk. The pitkal has also served a secondary function as a money lender to farmers who regularly deal with him. Fr. Cirillo observes that "many farmers would not join a co-operative society because of the fear that they might lose their pitkal's friendship" and "the farmer's dependence on the pitkal makes him look at the pitkal with respect" (B/387, pp.17-18). In 1957 it was proposed to centralize the marketing of produce through a single centre for the whole Island (B/253), but at least one of the farmers' Unions was quick to announce its opposition to the plan (B/54 - 11.6.1957, p.4). As on many parallel occasions the farmer was here faced with a choice:- between trusting the Union or 'Il-Gvern'. In most cases he would not venture to make his own decision on the matter.

matter. [P 65]

While the farmer does not favour the co-operative movement at present he is generally disatisfied also with the pitkal system and complains of the excessive profits being made by the pitkal, the sensal (a broker and transporter of produce) and the retailer. Very few do however venture to evade these middlemen completely by selling their produce directly to the consumer (B/387, p.17). This is probably the result in part of shortage of labour but in part also a reflection of the 'respect' in which the pitkal is held. The farmer is characteristically suspicious of any change in such a long-established part of his farming, even though he is loud with complaints of it.

The Government plan to centralize marketing on the one hand and to encourage the co-operative movement in the selling of produce on the other will not succeed without a great deal of patient education of the farmer supplemented by material incentives such as subsidies and other assistance already given in other aspects of agricultural development. The most successful co-operatives in Maltese farming to date are probably the two tractor co-operatives founded with the initiative and grant of free equipment by C.A.R.E. (Section 2). Here the farmer has seen a clear financial saving in plowing costs with no capital outlay on his part. He must similarly be persuaded that centralization and co-operatives in marketing would be to his advantage. Not only the farmers themselves but the consumers also would stand to benefit from a streamlining of marketing with grading and better packing and presentation of produce, while the improvements in Malta's position as an exporter of agricultural produce would fully justify the effort involved (B/253)[42].

YOUTH AND FARMING

In their pioneer investigation into the attitudes of the Maltese farmer Fr. Cirillo and his Royal University team stressed the crucial position of the younger generation in agriculture in the Islands (B/387). The present writer concurs with their views and considers the present retreat from farm and village as the most urgent problem in the industry. Something of the technical and economic background to this trend has been seen in Sections 2 and 3, but the social factors involved are no less important.

The fundamental contrast in outlook between the younger and older generations of the farming community today is that in the case of the older generation "with meagre opportunities in other occupations, and often

464 lacking any education at all they took up farming as their
184 natural calling" (B/387, p.9), but their sons are faced
178 with a choice both between occupations and ways of life. Their education is enabling them to compete with other sections of society for industrial and other non-agricultural employment while their emancipation, in terms of access to the world outside the village, is leading them to think of escape from the lowly social status of their fathers. They have been brought up to appreciate the insecurity of farming with its inadequate and fluctuating income and have seen the technical limitations and the hard and monotonous schedule of work with which their fathers have had to contend in order to provide even the most frugal living standards for their families. In very many cases the younger generation have been actively discouraged by their elders from contemplating farming as a livelihood. Within society as a whole they see farming as something of a low 'caste' and one example of this is the opposition faced by many a young farmer if he wishes to marry into a non-farming family.

The importance of this revolt on the part of the younger generation is clear when one considers the topic of this Section. The current policy is to change the pattern of farming in the Islands and to raise the standards of living of the farmers by the variety of methods mentioned and these are, quite naturally, being aimed primarily at the present farmers, that is to say the older generation. But the future of farming depends on the future farmers who are, it would appear, leaving or have already left the industry. Many of them do not plan to stay in farming longer than the time necessary to find another occupation and they are consequently not concerned with loans, subsidies, lectures, and the work of the advisory service. The farming which they are anxious to leave will, it is hoped, change rapidly in response to the measure outlined. But, even if only a few years are needed to show substantial results and a better kind of farming is evolved, the younger generations may not be there to take over. Many of them will have emigrated from the Islands altogether and others will have left the villages for all manner of employment in the towns.

654 The official aid to farming policy may fail, one
829 fears, on two accounts:

(i) The measures designed to assist the farmer and farming have not yet been as successful as was hoped because of the difficulties of having rapid and far-reaching changes accepted by a suspicious, conservative and largely illiterate body of farmers,

654 809 467 178 (ii) The younger generation are not interested in improving farming: they scarcely stop to think that any changes in the industry might be possible in their present anxiety to find a new job in a different walk of life. Thus they will probably not be available to take over Maltese agriculture, improved or otherwise, from their fathers.

SECTION 5 : Conclusions.

369 In conclusion one may attempt to draw together the several general points raised in the previous four Sections. The most important of these may be listed as follows:

(1) The twentieth century is witnessing an accelerating process of the 'urbanization' of rural Malta and Gozo (Section 1). This comprises

(a) material change (the development of electricity, roads, sewage, transport, and a variety of other amenities),

(b) cultural change following general, elementary education - that is literacy, 'emancipation' and the emergence of a critical public awareness,

[565] [1793] (c) social and economic changes which have laid the foundations of a rural middle class, unknown in the traditional village scene. Along with this have come modifications in the pivotal rôle of the Parish Priest and other priests. Some of their traditional functions, notably teaching and caring for the sick, have been taken over by specialists in such fields.

369 829 The factors outlined under (a), (b), and (c) are tending to extend the horizon of the individual villager far beyond the limits of his own village. Whereas he used to work and think within his family and village he is now aware of Malta and beyond.

241 464 178 (2) The particular physical limitations on farming in the Islands have, in the past, made the industry dependent to a very considerable extent on the meticulous hand-labour of the industrious Maltese farmer. This has been necessary not only in cultivation itself but also in the maintenance, and even construction, of the fields and terraces themselves (Section 2). The present younger generation of the farming community is showing itself unwilling to accept the life and work which conditions such as these involved. They have benefited from general elementary education, literacy, and contact with the world outside the villages to the extent of demanding work which seems to them economically and socially rewarding. The past twenty-five years have seen a rapid decline in the number of full-time farmers and farm-workers. Today the farmer, in most cases no longer assisted by his sons, finds hired labour both scarce and costly (Section 2).

industry in search of it.

(5) The Maltese farmer (and, incidentally, also the fishermen) has today a standard of living below the average for the whole country (Section 3). In large part this is related to

(a) the economic and technical difficulties facing his agriculture(Section 2),

(b) his inability, in many cases, to make the change from peasant, subsistence to the money-based, commercial farming of today (v.4).

In fact a considerable section of the full-time farming community is now operating either with very little or no profit or is striving to work in a perpetual, though fluctuating, debt (Section 3).

Yet this comparatively low living standard vis-à-vis the non-farming section of the population is in fact lower than it appears statistically (Section 3) because

(a) the farmer does not enjoy the limited working day (e.g. eight hours) demanded in most other occupations, and also demanded, significantly, by the full-time farm-labourer without fields of his own (Section 2),

(b) the farmer has even today a more modest level of demands (housing, clothing, food, recreation, etc.) than have the bulk of the rest of the population despite the growth in such demands, discussed in Section 3,

(c) many farmers have been living at a rather higher standard, than that to which they were accustomed, since 1945 on the savings they have retained from their profits accumulated during the siege conditions early in the war. These reserves are now, however, dwindling and disappearing.

(6) The farmer is still, in many cases, thinking as a 'peasant' subsistence producer although he is at the same time attempting to operate in a now commercially-orientated agriculture. This emerges in his attitudes to 'officialdom' in the shape of the Department of Agriculture, to co-operatives, to Farmers' Unions, to the agents and middlemen concerned with marketing of produce and the supply of seeds, etc. and to his fellow farmers. He is still very much an individualist in outlook and sceptical of any novel feature not tried and trusted in his experience. He is cautious where outsiders are concerned - notably Government officials, and he is doubtful of the validity, for Malta and Maltese conditions, of the advice of non-Maltese experts on agriculture and related topics. He will, for example, even look for a possible element of treachery in such as the Government's recent plant to improve the packing and grading of produce for export.

On the other hand, however, the farmer is characteristically loud in his assertions that "Government should adopt

829 a policy of long term assurances for agriculture" (B/387,
157 p.39). He claims that the Government "ought" to guarantee his prices, his markets, and "ought" to find the foreign export markets, and provide machinery, subsidies, etc. He also insists, incongruously, that farmers' needs could well be served by a strong and well-organized Union of Farmers and yet, in the next breath, he will reject outright any suggestions that he, individually, might take a prominent part in such a movement. The nature of this attitude emerges clearly from the collection of complaints and comments, made by farmers to Fr. Cirillo and his Royal University team (B/387). On the one hand, the farmer demands Government support for farming but, on the other hand, he speaks even of his fellow farmers as "they". Conservative, cautious and usually illiterate, he is quick to speak but slow to act (v.Section 4).

829 The new awareness of horizons outside the village is consequently limited in extent and confined in nature. The farmer's son, however, with his education and emancipation and his ideas of social and economic emulation, has a clearer vision of the illogicality of his father's situation but is not yet sufficiently mentally liberated from the past to see for himself any right course of action.

554 (7) As a class, the farmer is low on the social scale.
369 This arises partly from his illiteracy and the features outlined in (6) and is partly also the outcome of a tradition of wealth and education being confined to the cities and
[177] towns. Wealth and culture came easily to the urban section of Maltese society and both implied foreign contacts on a large scale. Meanwhile the Maltese farmer toiling in his fields remained cut off socially as well as economically.

178 Today this felt inferiority puts him
554

(a) in a weak position for bargaining with Government and 'officials' and business men fully prepared to take advantage of their rather better education,

(b) - if young and literate, in the position of being anxious to escape from his lowly class by leaving the village and farming as opportunity presents itself (v.Section 4).

654 (8) Official policy has been to assist farming in the
178 Islands by means of a variety of subsidies and guarantees designed to protect the farmer from unfavourable competition and fluctuations in market demand (Sections 2 and 4). The industry has, in the past, received such attention only in time of siege of widespread unemployment. The basic intention today is therefore

[135] (a) to enable Malta's only basic industry - agriculture - to develop under protection for it is held that "In an Island where mineral resources are non-existent agriculture must play a predominant part in the national economy" (B/239, p.2).

654 241 An F.A.O. report on investigations in Malta and Gozo observes that "Progress in agriculture is fundamentally a human problem; it depends on knowledge and the intelligent application of knowledge" (B/243, p.9). Within the Islands themselves there is a certain awareness of the situation and [181] particularly of the need for an official policy designed to develop the agricultural industry to the best advantage of the total economy of the Islands and to assist the farmers who "are perhaps the most hard-working, honest and God-fearing section of the community and the country will be the loser if it were to let them down" (B/387, p.7).

It must be noted that the position in Gozo is even more intractable than in Malta.

From work done in the field two major lines of approach to the problem of Maltese farming emerge:

(a) Development policy must be related to the present and future position of her only basic industry - agriculture - within Malta's total economy. In this context one feels that at present there is some over-emphasis on the parts rather than the whole, that is the individual farmer qua economic unit and on the means whereby he may derive increased profit from his present - generally uneconomic - farm-unit. It is too easy to discuss minutiae of policy which are "good for agriculture", rather than to consider either men in villages or the fundamental national needs.

(b) The long-term improvement of Maltese agriculture as regards both the national economy and the fortunes of the individual farmers depends on the personnel of farming as much as on policy imposed from above. Policies must be tailored to fit the varying capabilities for absorption among the farmers, from the potato-grower who cannot see why a certain variety of potatoe is not selling on the export market to the dairyman unable to comprehend the artificially distorted basis of the industry which provides his livelihood. Moreover, up to now few development plans have been aimed specifically at the future farmers of Malta, the young, literate generation of the farming community. Before they have all left farming and village society this generation must be made aware of the possibilities and potential of agriculture in Malta and Gozo.

468 829 234 FOOTNOTE: While this report was 'in print' it was announced that the milk producers had decided to withhold deliveries to the M.M.U.(B/59, 17th November, 1959, p.4). They argue that the guaranteed price given them should be increased to take into account current production costs - especially of fodder. The fact that they appear to have overlooked the £370,000 paid by the taxpayer in subsidizing the milk industry (1958) illuminates both the narrow outlook of the farmer and his failure to appreciate the uneconomic basis of his dairying industry today (v.9).

*159 156 234 232 useless in my district" but Pawlu, who has at all times in his life been conscious of education and a knowledge of things outside his village, is prepared to consider suggestions on their merits. This attitude pervades the working of his farm as a unit and has had important repercussions within his family. (v. Section 4).

*159 156 ●829 In spite of his own lack of advanced formal education, Pawlu has in fact an awareness of its importance which is still uncommon in rural Gozo. He is constantly stressing the need for education in its widest sense, both general and technical. He is anxious for his children to be educated to a standard far above his own, while, in the wider scene, he recognizes the importance of education for the farmer and farming. His attitude to the course of lectures for farmers (Section 4) is typical of the man. He observed that "attendances at the lectures have been big because the farmers are interested - they wouldn't go if they were not". The ideas put forward by the experts are weighed by the farmer and, if considered 'good ideas', are discussed at length in the villages or at the It-Tokk market on Sunday mornings. These lecture courses for farmers, and others like them such as the important McClemont demonstrations and lectures on dairying technique (Section 4), fail for Pawlu in so far as they do not lead to individual contact between specialist and farmer. No farmer would dream of making comment or criticising 'officialdom' - with which he naturally associates ventures like those of Haesler and McClemont[50]. "The Maltese back down much more easily than do the English in their relations with the authorities. In England you might complain to a Government Department and there would be argument for a day but in Malta such a complaint would mean petty victimisation for years". The farmer blames "clerical inefficiency" in Valletta for what he considers has been the failure to follow up the McClemont or other recommendations but no farmer would seriously consider complaining in person to officialdom. They just argue and become increasingly bitter with their lot.

* 159 178 829 [554] Farming for Pawlu means independence. He complains of the inferior social position which the farmer holds in Maltese society today and observes that the present generation of young people demand the means to enable them to equal the people of the towns in appearance, leisure and other superficialities. The old farmer with little formal education is not troubled by these notions. His life is the only one he can comprehend - apart from which his daily round leaves [464] him little time to think. The youngster, on the other hand, is desperate for an eight-hour job with steady income and leisure time in place of unpaid field work with his parents.

leisure time in place of unpaid field work with his parents.

Pawlu admits nevertheless that much of the inferior condition of the farmer derives from his inability to unite with other farmers (Section 4). Illiteracy, ignorance and suspicion are the major causes of his fear. Only a few farmers are members of either of the two opposing Unions of Farmers while the situation regarding co-operatives is equally unpromising. Pawlu himself became one of the organizers of a special 'Tractor Co-Operative', initiated by C.A.R.E. at the end of 1958 (Section 2) for a group of farmers in his home village. The members paid £2 each on joining the co-operative and were thereafter able to hire one of the two tractors donated by C.A.R.E. at only 10/- per hour instead of the commercial 17s. The fact that Pawlu himself was among the organizers of such a novel venture reflects his progressive outlook, and his standing in the village.

*159 156 829 Politics interest Pawlu, to a more than average degree His concern is based on an informed intelligence. A supporter of the Labour Party, he considers the Nationalists as holding the masses in contempt and he points to their emphasis on the Italian language and the non-Maltese culture which it represented as evidence. He reads the local Maltese-language press but is sufficiently independent of mind to have cancelled his subscription to the 'Lehen is-Sewwa' (B/65) at the time of the 'Integration' referendum on the grounds that neither the Church nor the Paper would publish an 'official' statement on the attitude of the Church. Yet his religious devotion is without question and he has a respected place in Church and village life.

*159 156 829 593 [555] [169] The Family. Pawlu lives with his wife and six of his children. His eldest son and daughter are both working as teachers in Malta. Another daughter has emigrated.

Pawlu's wife speaks only Maltese and had as little formal education as her husband, but she has at all times nothing but encouragement for her family in their education In this case there is not the usual gulf in outlook between parents and children on account of the education of the latter - for the parents fully realize the need. Pawlu's [462] wife used to work in the fields when young but now spends her time in the house. Certain jobs remain her special concern however, notably cheese-making, care of lambs and chicks and egg-collection.

*159 156 108 593 [895] The eldest son, now working as a teacher, is one of the young 'intellectuals' who are currently making an appearance in Gozo. The ties of family and respect between him and his father are strong but he is out of touch with the

*159 433

3 ratal	barley bran	1s. 4d.
8 "	cake	3s. 6d.
5 "	sulla	1s. 4d.
8 "	beans	5s. 0d.
1 basket	prickly pear	1s. 0d.
½ "	straw	6d
		12s. 8d.

- Sample daily feed for 46 goats yielding c.10 galls.

48 ratal	bean	£1. 10s. 0d.
16 "	barley	6s. 0d.
4 bundles	sulla	5s. 0d.
Furrajna (green	barley)	5s. 0d.
		£2. 6s. 0d.

[434] - Daily feed costs thus average £2.18.8 and the income from milk £3.16.6. Profit, making no allowance for labour costs is 17/10d. daily, varying slightly with milk prices.

*159 234 G. Husbandry.

(i) - Does not subscribe to the common view that "the more the feed the more the milk".
- Attempting to increase profit margin by cutting fodder costs, which he does in three ways:-
(a) By extending the area held under fodder crops. The cost of fodder makes this worthwhile even though it involves larger purchases of food for the family.
(b) By acquiring grazing land, a useful supplement to fodder crops.
(c) By improving feeding patterns to give a more balanced diet.

*159 241 (ii) - Land lies idle in the summer months since none is irrigated.
- Two rotations are in use,
(a) 1st yr: Wheat after manuring and thorough hoeing.
2nd yr: Sulla
3rd yr: Wheat
4th yr: Fallow
(b) 1st yr: Wheat
2nd yr: Sulla and Beans
3rd yr: Potatoes, Tomatoes, Melons after tractor plowing.
4th yr: Fallow

*159 43 ● 829 H. General.

- Completely dependent on the sale of milk to the M.M.U. at current prices of 5/6 to 6/- per gallon.
- Commercially much more sophisticated than the majority of Gozitan milk producers, this farmer runs a profitable concern.
- Has shown himself willing to cut losses by relinquishing land which he cannot work profitably.
[454] - At the same time makes considerable effort to add suitable land to his holding.
- Atypical in avoiding dispersion of effort over a variety of minor activity and in high degree of specialisation. This specialisation, however, renders him particularly vulnerable to any change in policy on the maintenance of milk prices.

*159 234 CASE II: Guzepp (A goats' milk producer with subsidiary cash cropping.)

Like Pawlu (Case I) Guzepp is a herdsman. He has however fewer goats (25) and no cows as "there is no place to keep them". Accommodation is in fact one of the major problems facing him and thwarts his efforts to increase his herd and thereby his earning power. Late in 1957 some of his

*159 234 premises were deemed by the sanitary authorities to be unfit for animals. He has no goat pens near his house but is prevented by the lack of capital from making substantial improvements in his facilities. Owing to shortage of space, he prefers to buy in fully-grown animals rather than to breed his own, which would be cheaper. Fodder storage [246] (he produces just enough sulla to feed his own goats) is a further problem and he tries to 'make do' with odd corners of often unsuitable space.

*159 241 433 Crop production is geared to the provision of fodder for the goats, together with the supply of vegetables for the family, and grapes (for wine), some tomatoes and other items for casual sale to local shops.

*159 434 The income side of his budget depends on the proceeds from the milk sold to the M.M.U. In August, 1957, he was getting about 16/9d a day for the milk sold. His grapes for 1957 brought him a further £66. His largest expense is fodder (apart from sulla) and its price is a constant [427] cause of grumbling and bitterness by Guzepp. Rents for 1957 totalled £35, that is about £1 per tomna for good land (generally red soiled 'hamrija') and 15/- for poorer, whiter ('abjad') soils. His cropping illustrates a common [241] practice in Maltese farming in that he tends to plant more [433] of a crop which has just had a 'good' season and thereby frequently suffers from glut conditions. Thus in 1958 he aimed to plant a large area to marrow (gargha baghli) because "last year's crop was good". In the previous year he had been unable to get all the potato seed he would have liked but, at the end of the season, was able to buy in potatoes very cheaply for the table because of the general glut in the crop which he had, as it transpired, fortunately avoided.

*159 438 443 Guzepp, like most farmers, is very critical of the great gulf between the price given by the pitkal and that paid by the consumer. In a small way he strives to avoid this by selling some of his produce directly in the local village, but this brings him only some £12 per annum.

x 159 511 829 178 Expenses are few apart from food, clothing and a few extra items such as Church contributions. His bill for entertainment is practically nil and his children are not yet old enough to demand large sums of pocket money - which one foresees they will do. Guzepp is very anxious to enlarge his farm and his herd and to improve his accommodation. In this development one feels he is looking to the future support of his now school-age sons. Certainly the older of these seem at present to look forward to following in their father's footsteps. But it is clear also that Guzepp's own deep attachment to the land and to farming is

*159
[245] - Many stocks now 20 years old require replacement.
- No early potatoes grown "because of sea-spray".
- Sulla sufficient for his own stock.

[233] [461] (ii) - Half of every working day is devoted to grazing the goats on waste and abandoned land.
- Fodder from his own sulla and barley but has to buy cake and beans, prices varying between £2 and £3 per qantar - expensive.

[241] (iii) - Manure from his own stock provides all his requirements and leaves surplus for sale.
- Uses 6 bags of sulphate of ammonia p.a., the only chemical fertiliser.

[231] - Pig feed costs 11/- per sack which lasts his 5 pigs 4 days.

H. General.

*159
● 829
24 - Has a hopeful attitude towards farming but still expects a great deal of Government help in the form of grants, loans and subsidies.
- Claims that his children intend to succeed him on the land but they are young enough to change their minds.
- Willing to accept advice, but not impressed by experts who tell him either "things he knows already" or give him advice "which is sound but not applicable to Maltese conditions".
- Has only a very general idea of costs and returns. Takes no account of value of family labour.

*159
[434] [234] - Basic income is from sale of milk (£300 in 1957) and grapes (£66) plus small quantities of vegetables (c.£12). Spends £100 p.a. on food for family in addition to his own produce.

[511] - Typical of farmer who is satisfied with his lot, keeps his family decently fed and clothed but spends little or nothing on non-essentials. He is anxious to improve his herd, accommodation and methods but his farm provides no financial surplus with which to do this.

[454] [241] - Continues to accept a standard of living far below that of his more sophisticated compatriots.

[511]

159 452 off until mid-November but, in the intervening two and a half months, the purchase of fodder had been continued and the debt maintained. In that September he himself put his debt at £60 and said that at the previous Christmas (1956) it had been £100. Thus a debt of £60 in the flush milk season of highest total receipts from the M.M.U. would appear to be the best financial position he could achieve. Removal of the guaranteed milk price to the producer could result only in ruin for this herdsman and the many in the Islands like him.

159 829 In spite of his own poverty Anglu maintains that he is fully aware of the artificial economic picture of which the guaranteed price is a part. In the same breath however he complains that he could sell his milk for more than the M.M.U. gives him in the short season. Here he overlooks the obvious outcome of a removal of the guarantee during the annual glut.

159 178 291 511 His financial hardships make it impossible for him to hire labour or to invest in any capital improvements to the farm or herd. Neither does it enable him to support his family as he aspires. This is especially evident in the case of clothing because the family lives in an urban area and therefore strives to appear as well dressed as their non-farming neighbours. Anglu observes that there has been a change both in the types of clothing worn and in the occasions on which they are worn. He speaks of a Doctor of the district who used to go barefoot in the streets carrying a pair of shoes to put on before entering a house or Church. Nowadays, by contrast, children attend school with shoes and are generally well turned out. This is particularly true of an urban area, where Anglu's children go to school and where his teenage children go to work - a son as an apprentice carpenter, one daughter as a shop assistant and another as a factory worker. None of his children is likely to contemplate farming as a way of life and means of earning a living, for, in their father's case they can see an extreme example of the problem facing many farmers throughout the Islands today, that is a man unable to make a living wage for himself and his family from a farm limited in possibilities by external factors and dependant on a guarantee which could be removed at a general election.

159 429 **CASE V : Summary.**

(A landless, urban, small-scale goats' milk producer)

A. Land.

Rents and grazes 1 tomna of wasteland.
Rents and works as a domestic garden 1 tomna of dry land, in the Urban area.

*159 The family has occupied the present house for several
423 generations and has acquired the street name as a family
551 nick-name (these nick-names remain the standard, even
semi-official, mode of reference though not of address,
[554] when the Christian name is used, v.B/376). Gnetu is a
[621] prominent member of the community in his part of the
village which now includes some non-agricultural workers.

*159 His outlook is rather more 'urban' than that of more
829 isolated farmers, such as Cass II. His adult son is an
461 active supporter of the local football club and a regular
234 cinema-goer. Gnetu himself is not concerned with such
relaxation. He is devoted to his animals and especially
to the goats which he will keep "because we have always
*159 had them". He takes an interest in farming and, despite
829 his illiteracy, is fully prepared to listen to advice.
544 He enters animals in shows at Ghammieri and attended public
234 lectures organized for farmers in 1957 (Section 4). He
178 thought the lectures and a film on dairying technique
interesting but gave the usual verdict that Maltese
farming suffers from special difficulties of its own which
cannot be solved by what he believes are "foreign methods".
He observes that "it would be an excellent idea to go to
the trouble of washing ones animals regularly but the time
and labour thus expended would bring no additional return
to the farmer". He believes that the methods which he
employs throughout the working of his farm are tried and
therefore to be trusted although in more than a few cases
some basic cost accounting (as suggested at the lectures)
would reveal the patent weaknesses in his argument.

CASE VI : Summary.

*159 (A goats' and cows' milk producer with a considerable land
423 holding.)

A. Land.

23 tmien of land, mainly dry, comprising 11 plots
in 7 parcels arranged in two main blocks, one in
the Ghajn Qajjet (Rabat-Dingli Uplands) one in the
Blue Clay Basin on slopes of Wied Qlejgha. The
former on soils of the l-Iklin Complex, the latter
on good, sheltered Carbonate Raw Soils.

[427] All rented from a number of landlords,
including the Civil government. Rent estimated
at c.£30 p.a.

*159 **B. Utilisation.**
241

The emphasis is on fodder crops.

Crop plan, Feb. 1957.

Plot 1	Potatoes	Plot 7	Sulla
Plot 2	Sulla	Plot 8	Tomatoes, potatoes.
Plot 3	Barley	Plot 9	Tomatoes
Plot 4	Barley	Plot 10	Vines
Plot 5	Vetches	Plot 11	Sulla
Plot 6	Poor grass for bolding and grazing.	Plus walkside fruits and vines in several plots.	

CASE VII : Wenzu (A goats' and cows' milk producer with a small land holding.).

Like Case VI, Wenzu has been a goat herder and is now anxious to concentrate on dairy cows. At present he holds 4 Friesians, belonging to himself and his sons, but he wants to import Ayrshires. This cow, says Wenzu, is better suited to Maltese conditions, needing less feed than the Friesian and standing up better to long periods of confinement in cramped stalls. Wenzu became interested in cows when the Government forbade the selling of raw goats' milk in Valletta. For a time thereafter he sold bottled milk in the capital and then returned to selling raw goats' milk in still unclosed areas such as nearby Cospicua until that too came to an end with the evacuation in 1940. After the War he went back to cows' milk production and sold his output to the M.M.U. He acquired the Friesians through an exchange for inferior quality and diseased goats organized by the Government (one cow for 13 goats). At present, he says, cows' milk production is the more profitable ("Six cows will support a small family") but that this would not be so were it possible to give goats good grazing land at low cost. He reckons that good grazing saves 15/- per day on the fodder bill.

Wenzu's Case illustrates an important feature of the study of a predominantly illiterate section of society. This is the prominence of personality in the thoughts and actions of the individual. Unable to read and suspicious of what he may hear over Rediffucion, Wenzu relies on personal contact to a very considerable degree. This is clear from a brief survey of his life. He speaks nowadays of a certain Dr. MacFarlane whose veterinary skill and advice impressed him and who originally recommended him to keep Ayrshires. To listen to Wenzu talking of this "Scots Doctor" one gathers that Wenzu last spoke with him quite recently. In fact, however, Dr. A.M. MacFarlane was Superintendent Veterinary Surgeon in Malta some half a century ago! A Mr. Hurst gave him advice on bulls some 25 years ago while, much more recently, Mr. Ebejer Blythe of the Department of Agriculture gave him much valued information on lucerne as a fodder and, latest of all, Dr. Godfrey Alton, the veterinary expert, has become something of a hero for the injections he has arranged. Evidently, therefore, any improvements in Maltese farming have a greater chance of success if this element of personal contact - particularly in the cases of illiterate farmers - can be established. One man who will argue with one farmer for a morning on a single topic stands a greater chance of general success than has the big public lecture or even the practical demonstration.

159 829 178 246 For once a single man can be convinced of the success of a novel method or crop he will soon be copied by his fellows. Wenzu himself observes that when he had heard about the lucerne for the first time and had planted some with great success in his own fields neighbouring farmers were not slow to copy him (v. Section 4).

CASE VII : Summary.

159 423 427 (A goats' and cows' milk producer with a small land holding.)

A. Land.

- Has 3 tmien, worked by another farmer who shares income (£21) with him.
- Holds on lease a further area which had been let out for building and brings him £32 p.a. - much more than could be obtained for its crops.
- Also rents grazing in summer months.

159 231 241 B. Utilisation.

- The 3 tmien field is under sulla, barley and a few vegetables.

C. Livestock.

159 23 234

- Is changing over from goats to cattle.
- Goats: 1954: 60; 1957: 44; 1958: 38.
- Cattle: 4 Friesians. Aims to build up the herd by private import of Ayrshires of which he has a high opinion. 3 of the cattle are owned by his sons though he tends them.

159 [454] D. Capital.

- No information, but appears to have some reserves.

E. Labour.

[464]

- Some assistance from a son who is in govt. employment.
- Hires no labour.
- Thus does great bulk of the work himself.

F. Production and Sales.

[434] [234]

- Milk (Oct. 1957) 10 gallons goats' milk, 9 gallons cows' milk daily to M.M.U. Gives sons a share in income though they appear to make no payment to their father for fodder, stall accommodation etc.
- Calves and kids usually sold after weaning.

159 231 G. Husbandry.

(1) Grazing.

[429] [311]

- Where possible, goats grazed out and this is said to save him 15/- a day and to reduce sulla consumption to 4 bundles daily.
- Rents 7 tmien of govt. land from part-timers at £1 per month from Jan. to Aug.
- This land is good, cultivable land untended because of part-timers' inability to work it.

(2) Fodder.

- Cake, barley, potatoes, beans, sulla.
- Feeds all that the animals will take.
- Buys in bulk when prices low.
- In six months (Oct. 1957-Mar. 1958) used nearly 2 tons of cake and 15 tons of beans.

[435] [434]

- Sulla is bought at 9/- to 16/- per hmiel according to quality and uses some 200 hmiel per annum.
- Fodder costs leave very small profit margin from milk.

159 156 H. General.

- Attempting to profit from sales to M.M.U. with no knowledge of the economics involved.
- Extremely suspicious of agents, government etc.

the money being repaid." Niklaws observes that "Farming depends on nature" and he points to the storms of late 1957 as an example of the way in which the farmer may suffer irreparable and unexpected loss. On this occasion standing crops, soil and field walls were washed away and the whole planting and sowing cycle interrupted.

The brothers also complain of the present marketing regime which, they claim, militates unfairly against the producing farmer. "There is no guaranteed market for field crops sold and there are too many middlemen taking too large a cut." The brothers cling to the typical idea in Maltese farming that the 'Government ought to guarantee sales of field-produce in the same way that milk sales are guaranteed'. They have little appreciation of ruling market conditions outside Malta. Niklaws says that the labour of the brothers is not considered as a cost - "if it were there would be no money left". They appear to have been in the habit of employing labour for many years and today have a full-time cow-hand. Only one of the brothers is married. Four of the brothers have therefore only themselves to support on their share in the income from this well-organized and apparently remunerative partnership, situated in one of the best dry-farming regions of Malta.

CASE VIII : Summary.

(Working partnership of five brothers with diversified production.)

A. Land.

c.70 tmien of unirrigated land in Żebbuġ Region. 16 field plots in 11 parcels in a linear arrangement extending over 2½ miles in the Żebbuġ and Wied tal-Isqof areas. All land lies in one of the best dry-farming regions of Malta on good marled Xero-rendzina and Carbonate Raw Soils.

B. Utilisation. (i) Typical arrangement.

		Winter	Summer
Plot 1.	8½ tmien	Potatoes & Wheat	Tomatoes & Cauliflower
Plot 2.	1 tmien	Potatoes	Cattle exercise yard
Plot 3.	1½ tmien	Onions, Potatoes, Vines.	Legumes & Vines
Plot 4.	3 tmien	Potatoes & Vegetables.	Cauliflowers & Vegetables.
Plot 5.	2½ tmien	Sulla & Barley	Tomatoes
Plot 6.	1½ tmien	Cereals, Cauliflowers & Tomatoes	
Plot 7.	2 tmien	Wheat, Cauliflowers & Tomatoes	
Plot 8.	7½ tmien	Sulla	Cauliflowers & Tomatoes
		Cauliflowers, Wheat & Tomatoes	
Plot 9.	2 tmien	Vines	
Plot 10.	2½ tmien	Potatoes	Tomatoes & Cauliflower
Plot 11.	21 tmien	Vines (3½ tmien)	
		Barley	Sulla, Tomatoes
		Vetches	Fallow
Plot 12.	2½ tmien	Potatoes	Sulla
Plot 13.	1½ tmien	Wheat	Sulla, Vetches
Plot 14.	2½ tmien	Fallow, Melons, Tomatoes & Cauliflower	
Plot 15.	5½ tmien	Citrus Orchard	
		Tomatoes	
Plot 16.	1½ tmien	Cauliflower	Tomatoes

*159 43 (iv) Potatoes are grown regularly for the home market in spite of price variations - reported as ranging between 50/- per qantar in 1956 and 8/4 in 1957.

(v) Home grown fodder and forage makes up c.80% of non-concentrate feed. Other crops make members of the partnership self-sufficient in foodstuffs (at a high level of consumption).

(vi) Annual sales of wine-grapes c.40 qantar.

(vii) The response to general variations in yields and prices is to maintain the general pattern of production. The syndicate has enough capital to survive periodic losses and therefore deliberately ignores fluctuations. The only alterations made in a planned cropping sequence result from natural hazards e.g. if a late crop of sulla fails as a result of poor germination, a rapid switch may be made to balck vetch.

c. Husbandry. General standards are good.

* 159 242 (i) Soil maintaining rotations are carefully and consciously practised. Thus leguminous fodders are regarded as essential in arable farming.

(ii) Fertiliser application is heavy:
- Organic manure is applied for the first two years of a four year cycle at a rate of c.60 sacks per tomna.
- Sulphate of Ammonia is applied to all the fields each year at a rate of 15-20 sacks per tomna.
- They do not regard the idea of green manuring with any favour although they use dry vegetable refuse mixed with dung.

(iii) They are very conscious of minor regional differences in soil and climate and regard the parcellated holding of selected land much more important than convenience of working a consolidated holding e.g.
- 'earliness' is associated with coastal situations and "early tomatoes will not come up in Żebbuġ".
- soils are classified as follows:
  - 'ħamrija' (red) is good for all crops
  - 'abjad' (white) for cereals and tomatoes but not for potatoes.
  - 'sewdina' (grey) for sulla and tomatoes.
  - 'tafli' (clay) poor for green crops.
  - 'ħirbi', an intermediate soil, easy to work.

The differences between these types and the presence or absence of nodule beds, saline layers etc. are held to be sufficient justification for rental differentiation as between fields and parts of fields.

This articulate consciousness of environmental variations even in this case reinforces conservatism and much more importance is attached to such natural 'controls' than to crop strains.

* 159 232 (iv) Cattle are well housed and fed according to yield. Very vague about balanced feeding and rely on traditional greens, beans, hay and cake. Nevertheless in the spokesman's own words they are aiming at 'better management of the cattle rather than more animals'.

* 159 829 232 242 (v) In some ways, the high standards achieved using traditional techniques are proving a barrier to further technical advances, e.g. the cattle are relatively free from disease and therefore more trust is placed in the expertise of the syndicate than in the 'book-knowledge' of a vet., e.g. whatever experts may say, any crop innovation must be demonstrated successfully and in the <u>immediate</u> locality.

159 198 234 substantial herd to hand over to their sons who, however, show no inclination to stay in farming.

*159 232 829 234 A glance at their herd reveals their interest to be in quantity rather than quality. They admit, moreover, that they lack a good deal of knowledge on management of a herd of this size. A number of their cattle die from diseases and ailments of which Antnin and Ġakbu have little appreciation - official sources revealed that two which died in 1957 had anthrax. Their own inclination is to slaughter an ailing animal for meat before it dies naturally. If a cow dies without replacement from the Government they become very resentful. They also suffer a high death rate among imported calves and again blame 'Government'. "The Government never tells us anything about the rearing of animals" assert the two men somewhat naively since they also maintain that "no-one but the farmers knows farming".

*159 234 231 In 1958, twelve of the cattle were Bastard-Inglisi type As the sanitary authorities would not grant a license for a larger herd to occupy the present makeshift accommodation (a patch-work, corrugated iron shed) Antnin and Ġakbu aimed to replace these Bastard-Inglisi with the same number of Friesian stock, though would have preferred to have gone on increasing the number in their herd - and thereby the amount of milk sold to the M.M.U.

* 159 234 433 (246) Antnin insists that "cows yield according to the amount they are fed". When asked for an estimate of the cost of producing a gallon of milk he asks "Who knows?" ("Min jaf?"). The fields held by the two men produce a considerable amount of fodder but much more has to be purchased. During glut conditions they feed very cheap cauliflower and, in the dry months between June and September, give the herd prickly pear at the rate of a lorry-load per day. They are almost unique among cows' milk producers in Malta and Gozo in that they are able to graze their animals on War Department land nearby although they have no guarantee of tenure.

*159 434 426 Despite the large holding of land and the recent rapid increase in the size of the herd, the financial position of Antnin and Ġakbu is precarious in the extreme. They are operating in a permanent state of DEBT, and have a fluctuating debit account with the dealer who supplies them with fodder (cf. Case V). This makes them reluctant to take on any new debts at high interest rates. The Government loans at 1% do however appeal to them as means of buying more cattle and still further increasing their milk production. Their debt is such that the two friends can rarely keep female calves but have to sell them to pay hire-purchase instalments on cows.

*159 198 829 [454] Their approach to farming is in fact a set of contradictions. With no capital reserves they are making every effort to expand their herd even though this means continued debt. They are full of "our rights as farmers" and yet "suspicious of the Government and what it says". As with milk, "the Government ought to be responsible for the marketing of field produce". On the other hand Antnin is "against co-operatives in farming", although he has never had any experience of any co-operative or farmers' union. They claim to be building up their farm and herd in order to be able to hand over a substantial business to their sons; but their constant complaint is that "Farming is finished in Malta" ("Il-biedja f'Malta spiċċat"), and the avowed intent of both sons is "to leave farming where we earn nothing". They talk of leaving to "get a job" as if farming itself is something less than a 'job'.

CASE IX : Summary.

*159 423 (A long-established partnership of two unrelated stock farmers now engaged in cows'milk production.)

A. Land.

[429] Approximately 100 tmien of dry land in south-east Malta, the bulk in one compact block but with several outlying plots. The exact limits are uncertain since some land owned or rented by others is worked by the partnership. 25 plots are held from several landlords, Defence Dept. being the most important, and there is access to a good deal of grazing land, generally held at low rents from Defence Depts.

*159 241 B. Utilisation.

	1957	1958
Plot 1	Sulla	Wheat
Plot 2	Potatoes, peas, beans, onions.	Potatoes, cauliflowers
Plot 3	Potatoes, sulla	Wheat
Plot 4	Used as a pig sty	
Plot 5	Wheat	Wheat
Plot 6	Sulla	Sulla
Plot 7	Sulla	Sulla
Plot 8	Some potatoes, cowshed, exercise yard, manure heap and pig sties.	
Plot 9	Fallow	Plowed
Plot 10	Sulla	Wheat
Plot 11	Sulla	Plowed
Plot 12	Beans, barley	Wheat
Plot 13	Wheat	Sulla
Plot 14	Wheat	Sulla
Plot 15	Wheat, sulla	Beans
Plot 16	Wheat	Beans
Plot 17	Potatoes	Wheat, beans
Plot 18	Beans, barley	Potatoes, wheat
Plot 19	Yard and buildings	
Plot 20	Wheat	Barley
Plots 21-25	Wasteland grazing	

*159 231 C. Livestock.

Shifting emphasis in recent years.
- Cattle 1956: 18; 1957: 36.
- Goats "some years ago": 36; 1957: 2.
- Pigs 8.

*159 231 The cattle are very mixed in breed including "Bastard-Inglizi", supposedly pure Friesians and crosses between the two.

*159 D. Capital.

42 (i) No freehold property.

[423] (ii) In perpetual debt, no reserves and frequent borrowings, particularly from the Government.

[454] (iii) Equipment - usual hand tools

[407] - rotary cultivator bought with a Government loan of £550, repayable at £100 p.a. plus 1% interest.

- small motor van, bought in 1953, for

[312] transport of milk.

- no piped water until Feb. 1958.

E. Labour.

*159 464 - No permanent hired labour.

- One man and his daughter together at 30/- per diem and one youth at 25/- engaged at busy times.

- Family labour: two partners and their two eldest sons work full-time and there is additional help from wives and children.

F. Production and Sales.

*159 434 435 - Income almost entirely from sale of milk to M.M.U. Production varies greatly: June 1957: 50 galls. daily; Dec. 1957: 35; Feb. 1958: 80. Sold at 5/6 to 6/- per gall.

- Male calves sold to butcher at £10; females sometimes sold at £30-£40 to pay debts.

- No accounts kept of feeding costs. These include one truckload of prickly pear (30/-) daily from June to October, beans at 55/- per qantar and cake at 46/- (July 1957). A considerable amount of grazing is carried out e.g. on sulla bought green at £6 per tonna.

- Potato sales insignificant and in 1957, owing to glut,

[433] involved a loss.

- Vegetables produced are all consumed by the families.

G. Husbandry.

*159 231 (i) - The importance attached to grazing of cattle is unusual. (Most Maltese cattle are stall-fed all the year.)

- The emphasis is on numbers of stock rather than on their quality. The turn-over from goats to cattle has been helped by the government exchange scheme and by Govt. loans.

[232] - Occasional outbreaks of disease unnoticed until too

[241] late.

(ii) - Crops are often neglected owing to time involved in animal husbandry.

*159 H. General.

159 234 829 The partnership is attempting to profit from guaranteed milk prices without the knowledge or skill to do so. The herd seems to have been built up beyond the numbers which can be properly tended by the labour available.

There is little knowledge of modern methods and still less of costs and returns. The view is firmly held that "cows yield according to the amount they are fed" and the reply to the question "How much fodder is required to produce a gallon of milk was "Min jaf?" (Who knows?).

The partners are extremely conservative in their attitude to marketing, suspicious of outside interference and hostile towards the idea of co-operatives. Yet they expect

[426] continued Government assistance.

Their general pessimistic attitude is summed up: "Il-bieđja f'Malta spiċċat" (Farming in Malta is finished).

Despite guaranteed milk prices on which the whole economy is based, the partnership is permanently in debt.

159 Their failure to profit contrasts with the success of the
829 Gozitan milk producer, Case I.
231 The partnership's main aim is to accumulate cattle with-
[433] in the current artificial economy of milk production. There is no thought or care for what might happen if the subsidy were removed or even reduced.

CASE X : Ġamri (An arable farmer in partnership with a brother and engaged in diversified production.)

*159 Ġamri is an arable farmer, specialising in fruit. He
241 has a couple of goats and sheep, a mule, and is keen to
23 acquire more pigs for fattening. Most of his effort is how-
427 ever centred on the land holding which he and his brother work
492 in partnership. Some fifty-three tmien are rented by the two brothers together while Ġamri himself rents a further ten tmien. About two-thirds of the land (17 plots) is owned by private landlords, one sixth belongs to the Church, one tenth to the Government and the remainder - about an acre - is owned by Ġamri's father.

*159 The working partnership of the two brothers is of many
492 years' standing. The brother's eldest son now works full-
464 time alongside the two men. The brothers say they could not
241 cope with any more land than they are working at present. They share the common view that hired farm labour is both uneconomic (at 25s or more for an eight-hour day) and inefficient. The land worked by the partnership is dry (baghli) apart from two irrigable (saqwi) tmien. In 1957 it was utilised as follows:

[311]

Fruit and vines	21 tmien
Cereals and fodders	18 tmien
Fallow, unproductive, or sub-lot	13 tmien
Potatoes	6 tmien
Other vegetables	5 tmien

*159 Apples are the biggest single cash crop and the overall
245 success of any year depends on them. They were introduced
242 to the district by Ġamri's father some years ago and now grow in large numbers in a sheltered valley along with lemons, oranges, mulberries, figs, cherry-plums and other fruits. The produce is good but is usually affected by some pest or disease. The most prevalent of these is a boring grub. Ġamri and his brother spend a large part of September and October simply gouging this pest from the trunks of affected trees - with penknife and piece of wire. They regard this time-consuming and unremunerative task fatalistically. But of late Ġamri has been wondering whether the same result might not be achieved in a fraction of the time by the application of some spray. He knows nothing of the details of this and is more than a little doubtful of possibilities.

*159 Since 1953 Ġamri and his brother have expanded their
245 area under vines, buying seedlings from the Government Farm
[435] at 1d each. They consider vines the most profitable of crops, especially grapes for wine since these can be picked

159 In the first two cases the seasonal distribution of
46 activity reflects the major points of contrast between the
24 'dry' and 'irrigated' operator. The herdsman stands in con-
23 trast to both of these with the care of his animals occupying
a large part of every day of the year - even including Sundays
and feste days when the field-working farmer expects to be off
duty.

159 Ġanri and farming
829 Ġanri is a highly intelligent man in his
24 forties who by his own efforts has progressed well beyond the
limits of his very elementary formal education. He reads the
[212] Maltese-language daily 'Il-Berqa' (B/55) and keeps abreast of
the school work of his children whom he encourages to learn
[191] English thoroughly as "the land cannot be divided among them
[891] all". English language is synonomous with education in his
thinking, and education, in turn, he sees as the means of
escape from the lowly position of the farmer in Maltese
society. "We are but an Arab breed", he observes somewhat
ashamedly. He himself has "little faith in the Government
[722] - which should help us". Much of this attitude had its roots
in the War years of 1939-45 when the siege and food shortages
produced something of a Golden Age for the food-producer.
The farmer has not forgotten the £10 offered by the Government
for 1 cwt of potatoes. Since the return to peace-time con-
[454] ditions the economic position of the farmer has certainly
deteriorated rapidly with the depletion in his reserves, built
up during hostilities, and the rise in labour costs and in the
[720] cost of living. During the War "the farmer was not so
[435] hungry as the townsman who had to rely on the black market";
now his position is one of a constant battle with rising
[434] costs. Ġanri, as an arable farmer, lacks the steady and
[178] guaranteed income of the milk-producing herdsman. His recent
[234] moves towards pig-meat production represent an attempt to get
into an apparently more profitable line.

159 His nephew and many other farmers, though not Ġanri him-
829 self, make the mistake of failing to distinguish between the
794 Church and the Government in their attitude to "the authorities".
18 Thus the nephew regards the Catholic Action movement (of which
178 he is an active member) as somehow "helping to run the country".
But even Ġanri himself thinks that the Social Action Movement
(another part of the Church's Lay Apostolate) must have some
part in the secular administration of the country for he be-
lieves that an application for relief for storm damage made,
through the Parish Priest, to that Movement amounts to an
159 approach to the 'Gvern' (Government) of which he is so full
829 of criticism. The case illustrates a point made elsewhere
794 that the Maltese farmer is still primarily village-conscious.
18 Clearly this is not to deny, however, that his horizon today
178 is much wider than was the case when his father regarded

159 Valletta as a mysterious other-world to be entered cautiously
829 and very occasionally by the humble and bare-foot farmer.
181 Ġamri is typical of the section of the farming community
178 in Malta and Gozo which has absorbed an education beyond anything in previous generations but whose age prevents them taking the lead into any kind of Maltese farming reconciled with current social, economic and technical changes. He is "too old now to move from farming", but he is encouraging his children to acquire the education which will help them to escape from the land altogether.

CASE X : Summary.

159 (An arable farmer (Ġ) in partnership with his brother and
423 engaged in diversified production.)
(Details refer to Ġ alone unless otherwise indicated.)

427 **A. Land.**

- Ġ has an interest in 17 plots totalling 62.5 tmien; of this, 53 tmien is rented by the partnership.
- One large plot of 21.5 tmien, the remainder ranging from 1.0 to 8.0 tmien.
- All within an area of c.1 sq. mile in the Binġemma Basin and in Ġnejna, on a variety of soils, mainly Terra Rossa and Carbonate Raw Soils.
- 41.0 tmien owned by private landlords, 9.6 by the Church, 6 tmien by the Government, and 3.2 by Ġ's father.
- Rent approx. £30 p.a. varying from 8/- to 14/- per tomna.

159 **B. Utilisation.**
241

- The full range of crops grown in a complete year (1957-8) is shown in Table 6 (WORK ANALYSIS).
- In summary:

Fruit and vines	20.9	tmien
Cereals and fodders	17.9	"
Potatoes	6.2	"
Other vegetables	4.9	"
Fallow or unproductive or lot 'bin-nofs'.	12.6	"
	62.5	tmien

159 **C. Livestock.**
231

- Relatively unimportant in early 1957, but a herd of pigs is being built up and in 1958 numbered five sows and their litters.
- One mule.
- 2 goats, 2 sheep; milk is purchased as these do not supply family's needs.
- 2 dozen hens, rabbits.

159 **D. Capital.**
423

(i) - No freehold land apart from one small patch of roadside waste.

454 (ii) - Recent investment in the construction of pig-sties.

(iii) - Cash reserve of £400 in April 1958 represents a reduction of 50% on reserve held a year previously; £200 spent on building up pig herd and accommodation for same; remainder covered deficit on year's farming and special expenses e.g. road surfacing, hospital expenses etc. Ġ expects to build up his cash reserve again in ensuing years.

159 (iv) - Equipment:
407 - Usual hand tools, cart, etc.
427 - Ġ owns no mechanical equipment but his brother's rotary cultivator is used on the joint holding, Ġ

*159 The larger pieces of ground are put to potatoes, tomatoes,
29 artichokes (qaqoċċ), marrows (qargħa bagħli), and a variety
31 of vegetables. Fig, pomegranate and other trees fill the
corners and edges of fields and a tomato seed-bed and a hen-
[406] house also manage to find space in odd corners. Two machine-
[343] driven pumps and a few tiny storage and shelter rooms complete
[134] the scene. The block of fields is in a small sheltered
valley on the east coast of the Island and contains clay soils
tending to be heavy, especially in wet weather.

*159 Pietru's irrigable fields are clearly the focus of his
241 interest and attention. He observes that they bring in a
433 greater profit per man/day of effort than do the dry fields
434 which he prefers to leave to the wife and children to culti-
829 vate on a more casual basis. Nevertheless Pietru is not able
[464] to make a profitable concern of his farm despite his own
heavy working schedule and the full-time assistance of at
least two teenage children. In fact he is poor enough to
qualify for C.A.R.E.[27] food distributions. He is however
content with farming as an occupation and critical only of the
lack of adequate remuneration. His attitude is to 'make the
most' of his farm within current limitations. He was a
[474] founder member of a C.A.R.E. sponsored tractor co-operative
(Section 2) although he admits that when the project was first
suggested he was opposed to it on the grounds of rather having
the money than letting the Government get it. This belief
that the Government is behind everything is characteristic
(Section 4). C.A.R.E. is of course an independent organiza-
tion distributing American surplus food and equipment.

*159 Thus Pietru's son who works full-time with his father is
178 faced with his father's industry and enthusiasm for farming on
241 the one hand but he can see for himself the apparent impossi-
bility of achieving anything above low living standards.
Whether he will join the trek away from farming is not yet
clear. His educational standard is lower than is the case
among many of his generation and it may be that he will have
difficulty in finding employment outside farming.

If Pietru can improve the efficiency and profitabily
of his farm (by using better suited crops, new methods and
new equipment with Government financial and advisory assis-
tance) his son might be pursuaded to stay in it. The prob-
lem of Maltese farming today is that there are very few young
men in the farming industry who show as much inclination to
[426] stay on the land. The Government has been keen to assist
[654] the full-time farmer with loans and other help in an effort
to encourage him to stay on the land and to develop agricul-
ture to the full but it has done comparatively little for
the young men in farming who are, in the long term view at
least, the more important. If they cannot be induced to
stay in farming the industry would appear to be doomed.

000 was taken for granted.
*159 (iii) Reasonably prepared to try new crops if they are proven
178 in his district. Not prepared to accept anything
242 technically as revolutionary as a wheelbarrow mainly on the ground that "it is not used here".

*159 CASE XII : Ċenzu (A cows' milk producer and village weighman.)

557 Ċenzu is an example of one type of part-time farmer in
241 Malta and Gozo in that his farm is the more important of the
234 two occupations for his livlihood. His work as licensed
[463] village weighman is important both because of the extra income which it brings and on account of the social standing which goes with the office. He is a shrewd and literate man who earlier in his life also engaged in importing and
[454] other business. He was one of the many farmers able to
[362] build up a substantial reserve as a result of the 1939-45
[727] War. The house is spacious and well-appointed by local standards and Ċenzu and his small family enjoy comfortable living conditions. His pre-War premises were damaged during the War and he received some £1800 official compensation to which he added a further £1200. This money was put towards the new house and towards the costs of building
*159 up his present herd of 12 cows, a bull and 10 goats. The
234 milk produced and sold to the M.M.U. provides the basic
434 element of his income but he also grows cash crops for sale.
241 In the 1956/57 winter a third of his crop area was devoted to fodder. This increased to 74% in the following winter but, given a substantial improvement in the prevailing prices for cash crops, it is likely that he would devote more space once again to these and buy in a larger part of the fodder
[432] needed. In 1957 he purchased over £1000 worth of fodder and received about £1350 for milk sold during the same period.

*159 Unlike most farmers he keeps detailed records of his
829 income and expenditure on the farm and animals and on the
474 weighing side of his business, but he remains unwilling to
[451] discuss his revenue with even apparently trusted outsiders. This reticence seems to relate to the traditional independent outlook of the farmer rather than to any anxiety to hide his accounts from a sense of guilt. He was prepared to join the Malta Milk Company (Il-Kumpanija Maltija tal-Halib) because he saw this as of some benefit to the milk producer in his relations with the M.M.U. authorities. But he has never been a member of a farmers' union and is clearly not interested in them although he thinks "A union might be a good idea". He shares the typical failure to appreciate the rôle of an efficient Union. Neither is he interested in joining a producers' Co-operative (Section 4).

000 As village-weighman he has a high social standing in the

*159 A village-weighman he has a high social standing in the
829 district. His literacy, spacious house, and herd of cows
178 further enhance his status. He maintains that within the
[554] village the place of the Parish priest is as ever it was
[793] "in spite of the new learning". He notes that the increas-
[626] ing number of dissenting voices in the village are kept firmly in their place by the pressure of public opinion but that political rivalry, a comparatively recent feature in
[177] the village, is growing. The returning emigrant brings new ideas - including some on religion - but the strength of the Church remains much less questioned than is the case in
[794] the towns. Censu shares the still general view that money given to the Church is "payment towards the good of the
[651] community". Money paid to the Government in the form of taxes would, on the other hand, be regarded as an imposition bringing no benefit to the individual, and therefore to be avoided.

CASE XII : Summary.

*159 (A cows' milk producer and village weighman.)

423 A. Land.
427 33 Tmien in Mqabba-Kirkop Plain:
4 Field plots in 3 parcels, on Terra Rossa Soils and Xero-Rendzinas.
All leased from 2 landlords: Total rent £34 per annum.

*159 B. Utilisation.
24 Over 5 Tmien wasteland.
Main concentration on fodder, which accounted for 74% crop area in 1957/58, as against only 33% in 1956/57 winter season.
2 tmien under barley - pulled green.
3 tmien under sulla.
6½ tmien under vetches.
5 tmien under wheat.
c.10 tmien under potatoes.
Remainder under vegetables, prickly pear and fallow.
Main cash crops potatoes and onions.

*159 C. Livestock.
231 Late 1957 - 13 head of cattle (10 milch cows, 2 calves,
234 1 service bull). All Maltese Friesian. 10 goats; 1 ewe; 2 horses; 50 poultry; rabbits.
This herd was built up from 6 goats, 4 sheep and 1 cow in 1938.

*159 D. Capital.
[423] - No freehold land. Owns large village house.
[454] - No statement as to capital reserves but general evi-
dence suggests a sum of the order of £1500.
[409] - Equipment - no machinery, but normal range of local tools.

E. Labour.
*159 - Family labour - one 30 year old son.
464 - In 1956 male hired labour amounted to 60 days, and
[465] female to 90 days.
Cost - men c.£1 a day, women c.14/- a day.
Hand labour almost entirely for sowing during autumn and winter and harvesting in early summer.
[489] - Hires heavy tractor plow, rotary cultivator and
[241] threshing machine each year. Costs of contract
[407] plowing 15/- to £1 a tmien.

*159 433 451 land but maintains that it is becoming uneconomic because of high labour costs and difficulty of raising yields any further.

(iii) Makes careful practical distinctions between types of land:

*159 134 241
- some fields have 8 inches of soil on rock platform and these can only be worked by hand.
- deeper soils up to 3 feet thick need periodic deep plowing although this may result in the bringing to the surface of "newba" (or "melh" - salt) - sub-surface saline concentration with harmful results.
- red and white soils have different characteristics for tillage and crop-growth.
- notes the presence of a thin, very hard weathered layer on top of Globigerina bed rock. This "skorba tal-blat" is believed to prevent the movement of moisture from the rock water-table to overlying soil.

*159 159 626 (iv) In spite of literacy, general initiative and acumen he is conservative about trying new ideas. Here, as elsewhere, the chief obstacle appears to be social rather than economic - the fear of being different and the fear of failure in the eyes of the rest of the community.

*159 ● 829 (v) In spite of (possibly because of) experience in check-weighing, is no more prepared to trust M.M.U. and official marketing agencies than any other farmer.

CASE XIII : Toni (A part-time arable farmer and caretaker of a military camp.)

*159 241 434 An example of part-time farming in which the field operations are the subsidiary part of the business - from the financial point of view though not as regards the amount of time spent on them.

His caretaking duties bring him some £5 per week for most of the year and yet leave him with enough free time to cultivate several irrigable patches near the camp. Now aged nearly seventy he works a much smaller total area than the thirty tmien of his younger days. He could in fact live on his income from his caretaking and continues to work the fields for four reasons:

(a) To provide food for his present family of three,
(b) To produce a supplementary income from the sale of cash crops,
(c) To occupy his time with the farming which he knows - as something of a hobby,
(d) To provide his emigrated sons each "with a piece of land" when they return to Malta for their retirement.

241 198 46 *[159] Items (b) and (c) reflect his independence of farming for the maintenance of himself and his wife and daughter, while (c) and (d) suggest that although farming ceases to be the countryman's livlihood he inclines to retain a residual interest in it even when he has been away from Malta for the greater part of his working life. This is a characteristic [369] feature of rural Malta and an important aspect of the recent increase in part-time farming. The 1957 Census of Agri- [162] culture lists 9,588 part-time as against 7,813 full-time farmers (B/164, p.20). The trend towards part- in place of full-time farming is significant in the present overall retreat from agriculture. It represents in many cases a

241 178 46 first stage in the move from the land and one expects it to be succeeded, possibly in the following generation, by a complete break with the land or the maintenance of a purely residual and casual interest, as in (d) above. In this *[159] case, Toni continues to produce cash crops for sale but his sons when they return are not likely to do so. Thus this type of small scale part-time farming will have little or no importance in agriculture as a producing industry.

*159 241 178 829 Toni himself substantiates this view. "Farming has no future in Malta since there is no money in it for the younger generation, and so you can't expect people to go on working fields if they can avoid it". He sees the farming population as a depressed class and attributes this in large part to the fact that "The farmers count for only 12,000 votes at election times". Unions are, for Toni, "no use for the farmer and his problems" because, it appears, of suspicion and ignorance. He further observes that "the Maltese farmer grumbles easily - because of the same factors. This is itself discouraging the younger farming generation from staying on the land and struggling against rising costs to sell products which are but feeble competitors against the imported article.

He remains dubious of the effects of even the present Government policy of assistance by both financial support in various forms and attempts to introduce more efficient methods and better adapted and therefore more profitable crops, etc.

CASE XIII : Summary.

*159 423 (A part-time arable farmer and caretaker of a military camp.)

A. Land.

- 2 plots of irrigated land at il-Ghadira and il-Hofra both in the Mellieha Isthmus area.
- Several plots of dry land, usually held idle for relatives who are expected to return from Canada.
- [427] Soils: i-Iklin complex.
- Rented from Civil Government and War Department.

*159 B. Utilisation.

- [241] Irrigated plots carry potatoes, tomatoes and vines with a great variety of vegetables.
- Dry land: potatoes, tomatoes, beans, sulla, onions, herbs for home consumption.

[231] C. Livestock. 60 or 70 rabbits, 1 sheep.

*159 D. Capital.

- 454 No freehold land, but owns a house in the village.
- Usual hand tools.
- 422 Spray and rotary cultivator recently acquired.
- 423 Financial position not disclosed but appears to have considerable reserves.
- Owns a car.
- Son owns motor lorry sometimes used on holding.

*159 E. Labour.

- 464 Some help from wife and daughter but remainder of family have either emigrated or entered non-agricultural employment in Malta.
- [465] Formerly hired a labourer at £5 per week but he left for the Dockyard in 1955. In 1958 it was difficult

*159 [464] to find farm labourers even at 25 to 30/- a day.
- Occasional hired help at harvest time.

F. Production and Sales.

[434] - Main profit from tomatoes, grapes and potatoes. Subsidiary income from vegetables.
[433] - Attempts to space out production and sales by using
[251] many different varieties and storing, e.g. potatoes until prices are high.

G. Husbandry.

*159 241 43 (i) - Potatoes: three crops annually on best land.
- Artichokes: replanted every 4 years.
- Tomatoes: seed beds attached to irrigated plots carry many varieties.
- Melons: has experimented successfully with seed sent by relative in Canada.
- Cauliflowers: 4 crops between August and March, earliest sold before heads are formed.

(ii) - Manure brought from Luqa; 4 truckloads - £22 plus £8 for carriage will last one year. Also uses town refuse.
- Copper sulphate spray for potatoes, paraffin spray as weed killer.

(iii) - Has recently added to holding by reclamation of wasteland. Constructed a 2-tmion field, soil for which cost £150 (20 truckloads) and transport £50. This field returned £60 worth of potatoes in first year, £35 of tomatoes in the second. In autumn 1957 was preparing to repeat the process.

(iv) - Irrigated land rested under sulla every fourth year.

H. General.

*159 242 [463] [465] An unusually proficient part-timer cushioned by income from position as camp caretaker (£5.12.0 per week when camp not fully occupied). His job appears to leave him plenty of time to devote to his holding. He is willing to experiment and take risks, though experiments are concealed from his neighbours until proved successful. Has a lively appreciation of how to obtain best returns from his produce; very much au fait with market conditions.

*159 434 [451] Keeps fairly careful accounts and, according to his own statements, makes a profit of £250 p.a. from farming:

Receipts from produce	£450
Labour costs	£ 50
Seeds, manure, transport	£150
Profit	£250

Value of produce consumed by family £30.

His two jobs have made him appreciably more prosperous than his neighbours. Without the subsidiary income from caretaking his financial position would be extremely precarious. As it is he is able to amass a considerable [454] capital reserve.

PART 2. Heavy Tractors and Maltese Farming.

*159 157 829 CASE XIV : Ġanni (A young, progressive contract-plowman, with heavy tractors and other mechanized equipment.)

Ġanni is a bachelor in his late twenties. In most respects he is quite atypical of Maltese farmers today but his work and attitudes illustrate most vividly the economic, technical and social problems facing agriculture and the rural community in Malta.

His youth, his knowledge of written and spoken English, his first hand acquaintance with Australia, the United Kingdome, Italy and other countries, his belief in mechanization as the way to make money in Maltese farming, his social

*159 159 829 rojection of his village background, and his attitude to agricultural and other authorities in the Islands all mark him out as apart from the 'traditional' kind of farmer. At the same time, however, his case reflects the frustration and impatience of his own generation in the agricultural community.

*159 423 167 190 241 441 He comes of a village family in which his father and paternal grand-father were both butchers. His father acquired a small farm of some two acres to provide vegetables for the family but neither Ġanni nor his brother, a few years his junior, was keen to expand the family holding. The family butchering business held no more attraction for them and was relinquished by the father when he retired from full-time work some years ago to run a small bar in the village. Both the brothers thought that neither butchering nor farming presented scope for money making so they emigrated to Australia. Ġanni's seven years there left him unsympathetic towards farming as practised in Malta, with its fragmentation, hand-labour and other limitations. He saw mechanization on the Australian pattern, with tractor-drawn, three-furrow plows, combine-harvesters and a variety of other large implements, as the only way to make Maltese farming a profitable venture.

*159 177 241 409 He returned home full of ideas of making money as a contractor-plowman. His native knowledge of Maltese farmers and farming left him with no illusions as to possibilities. Ġanni's subsequent efforts to find takers for his deep-plowing have entailed a hard fight against prejudice and criticism. Clearly many of the objections raised as to his methods and machines being unsuitable for Maltese conditions have not been without foundation but he has pushed ahead, working over a larger area, buying new types of machinery, etc.

The present discussion is concerned less with the technical details of this kind of heavy mechanization in Malta than with the attitudes which it reveals - especially the tremendous gulf in outlook between the older farmers and the few <u>young</u> men like Ġanni who are still making some effort in Maltese farming. It is held that these latter are more important than their present numbers would suggest since, without their sustained effort, an economic and social continuity will be lost. They are individuals upon whom some new or improved farming could be built in Malta and Gozo.

*159 241 829 <u>Ġanni's view of farming in Malta.</u>

"Farming in Malta is today generally uneconomical because of the high costs of the necessary hand-labour and because of the difficulties facing the mechanization of field-work" (Ġanni). He attributes what he regards as the present dismal prospect of Maltese agriculture to the lack of a guaranteed exportable crop, on the one hand, and to the lack of direction to the farmer from the agricultural authorities, on the other. Nevertheless he believes that neither

*159 241 829 of these problems is without solution and he puts a great part of the blame on the Maltese farmer himself who is prevented says Ġ by his illiteracy and suspicion from uniting and from seeking to improve his own farming. He maintains that it is possible to make money in farming today in the Islands, but only with the right methods, ideas and facilities. This is where he himself comes in, for he believes his ideas on mechanization are the answer, leading to the elimination of hand labour as far as possible. He insists that a profitable farm must be a workable unit, that is a large patch of twenty, forty or more tmies capable of being worked by mechanical implements. Moreover, he insists that the farmer should, where possible, sell his own produce to the consumer in order to evade the 'middle-men' and thereby make a greater profit.

Ġanni himself talks vaguely of acquiring such a farm, although to date his contract-plowing has absorbed all his profit-making energies.

Ġanni's view of the farmer in Malta.

He lays a great deal of the blame for the present agricultural difficulties at the door of the farmers themselves. His view of his fellow farmers and villagers approaches cynicism: "The farmer's illiteracy prevents him from admitting that anything could be better than that which he knows. It also prevents him from trusting other farmers and prevents him from realizing the folly of putting bad-weight with produce for export. The young people who are far from illiterate and will listen to reason are not staying on the land long enough for this to be of lasting benefit to agriculture". He observes that the farmer is keen for a sure profit but not at all anxious to plunge his often considerable capital into [178] a new venture such as buying a tractor. In fact he will not accept any new method or crop before he sees it a working success - preferably in a field near his own. This applied particularly to the 'outlandish' ideas on deep-plowing which Ġanni brought back from Australia. His fellow villagers regarded his 16" mould-board, three-furrow plows with great suspicion, and his ideas on potato-ridging, combine-harvesting and threshing met with no more approval initially.

[454] Ġanni insists that the farmer's saving is merely "an aimless accumulation of money: a man may look poor in dress and have £1000 tucked away". He says of an old lady in a nearby lonely house "She wears no shoes and has never been to Valletta but will die leaving thousands".

181 241 829 This conservatism and reluctance on the part of the illiterate farmer emerges, therefore, as a major difficulty in the way of improvement and modification. It is one which tends to be overlooked by well-meaning experts and officials who forget that, unlike themselves, the farmer is unable to

181 241 829 road of successful experiments of one kind or another in a foreign land - he will only be satisfied with conclusive proof before his own eyes. Moreover the farmer often finds it hard to convince himself that some expert or high-ranking advisor on affairs agricultural can in fact be working for the benefit of the farmer and not himself. This is something new in his experience.

Mechanization.

*159 407 422 429 492 Ġanni and his brother work their machinery contracting business together, doing all but the biggest repairs. They have (1958):

(i) a three-furrow (previously a two-furrow) mould-board plow, the only one in the district,

(ii) a triple disc-plow (originally a double) for heavy ground,

(iii) a rotavator. Originally the brothers had a small rotavator but they complain that this does no more than kill off the weeds for a short time and harden the soil just below the rotavated surface. In 1958 they were buying a 5' trailer with 4 revolving claws which met with much derision from local farmers because of its weight.

(iv) a three-ton truck,

(v) a twelve-tined harrow,

They are keen to add (1958) a thresher and a small combine harvester which "might work in Malta with effect". Ġanni would rather "import a combine than let £1000 lie idle in the bank, unlike most other farmers". "New machinery soon pays for itself and is the way to make money in Maltese agriculture today". He advocates tyred tractors for Maltese conditions as they are easier to get out of rough ground and more convenient to cope with road transit. Many farmers prefer the caterpillar-tracked type (v. Case XV). He maintains that the tyred-tractor is better even for the deep-plowing which he advocates. This deep-plowing has grown in popularity only slowly - Ġanni is fully aware that "there may be drawbacks", but he reckons to work his four-month season each year to the full, earning about £5 per day on six days per week. The rest of the year is taken up with contract work with the machinery on building and other sites together with some attention to the few fields held by the family. The area covered by the brothers in their plowing operations extends to something like a quarter of the area of Malta (v. B/381).

[465]

Ġanni and the village.

*159 156 Ġanni is an outsider in his own village in so far as his literacy, travel and, especially, his Australian experience and his 'new ideas' have put him socially out of touch with his fellow-villagers. He maintains enough of a link with the village (through his father) to be able to live there and

*159 551 [441 [511

Socially and economically this man is not a farmer. For two generations the machine importing and other business dealing of the family have given them something of a middle-class status in the village. Their standard of living and the house they occupy reflect their above-average prosperity while their literacy and foreign contacts have further enhanced their social standing.

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PART 3. A Note on the Fishermen of Malta and Gozo.

The fishermen of the Maltese Islands deserve mention in this report as their position today has many points in common with that of the farmers.

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A 1957 estimate put their number at 840 (B/177 - 1957, Section F, p.1). This represented about 1% of the total gainfully occupied population at the time and is equivalent to only 11% of the number of full-time farmers in the Islands, although only about half of the 840 appear to be full-time fishermen. "Many are engaged in the industry for part of the year only and they usually have an laternative occupation ashore" (B/250, p.13).

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Burdon, in his 1956 report, sums up the present condition of the fishermen : "The most remarkable feature of the industry is the diversity of methods which individual fishermen use. Some fishermen are more advanced than others, but in general they are progressive and their knowledge of the local fisheries is extensive. Unfortunately they have little contact with the world beyond Malta and do not learn of new developments in fishing technique. This is aggravated by the comparatively low standard of education" (B/250, pp.13-14).

[871

The parallel with farming and farmers in Malta is clear. Burdon observes that recent developments "make it imperative that vocational training should be given to the fishermen. This must be simple in form and should be taken to the fishermen - i.e. the classes must be held in the fishing centres at times when the fishermen are available. But such measures are unlikely to meet with success if confined to the fishermen whose livelihood depends upon fishing whenever the weather permits. Special attention must, therefore, be paid to the children of the fishermen who will become the fishermen of tomorrow" (B/250, p.14).

226 463 871 879 [14]

The present writer holds that the need for education in agriculture is exactly parallel to Burdon's recommendation. But, whereas a start on these lines has already been made in farming (Section 4), nothing has been done in the case of fishing, although the need for the technical education of the fisherman has been stressed since as long ago as 1931 (B/237, p.47). There are still no qualified Maltese skippers (B/250, p.14) and, for work in the more distant grounds off Lampedusa and Sicily, Italians are employed. They are regarded with some awe by local fishermen for their literacy, technical knowledge and the rather higher wages which they can command.